

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Wilkins
Headteacher
The Grove Primary School
Hazel Grove
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 0JG

Dear Mrs Wilkins

Short inspection of The Grove Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2015, you have led the school with a strong determination that all pupils should receive the best possible education. You are well supported by a strong leadership team and committed staff who share your passion for helping pupils be the best they can be. Morale among the staff is high because they feel well supported and you consider teacher workload when implementing new ideas.

You have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. You and your leadership team have worked hard to bring about the changes needed in school. You have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and what needs further improvement. Governors know the school's main priorities and are committed to supporting the school. They undertake visits to monitor your work and ask questions to assure themselves that your actions are having a positive impact. As a result, the school continues to improve.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by increasing the expectations for all groups of pupils and to consistently provide constructive feedback to pupils. You have successfully addressed these recommendations. You make sure that teachers have the tools they need to teach pupils to a good standard. Furthermore, you make sure that teachers follow the school's feedback policy consistently.

Strong middle leadership has helped bring about many of the changes you have

made. For example, you quickly identified that the teaching of mathematics was not raising standards quickly enough. You and your middle leaders set about improving the teaching of mathematics. You ensure that pupils' mathematical fluency and reasoning skills are well taught. New resources support teachers to challenge pupils in lessons, especially the most able pupils. Consequently, more pupils leave the school reaching the expected standard in mathematics than previously. You are not complacent and rightly recognise that further work in mathematics is needed.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You, your staff and your governors give the safety of pupils the highest priority. You ensure that the checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with pupils are robust and securely recorded. Staff have regular and effective training. Staff feel confident to use the school's systems to report any concerns. You are diligent when recruiting staff and ensure that appropriate vetting checks are made.

Leaders keep a close eye on the welfare of any pupil whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They go to great lengths to ensure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need. You and your leaders are confident to seek advice from outside agencies and are not afraid to challenge them when they do not act quickly enough. The family liaison worker knows the pupils and their families well in order to offer timely support.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they are well looked after. They understand how to keep safe online and older pupils are clear on the safe use of a mobile phone. You have comprehensive risk assessments in place. This enables pupils to be safe in and around school.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the lines of enquiry to consider during the day. These included establishing what actions leaders have taken to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing. We agreed to see how effectively teaching supports pupils' writing, especially for the middle-prior-attaining pupils. We also agreed that I would explore how well leaders and teachers identify and challenge the most able children in the Reception classes. In addition, we looked at how well the school manages pupils' behaviour and conduct in and around school, and how effectively leaders manage pupil exclusions. Finally, I considered whether safeguarding is effective and the steps you have taken to improve attendance, especially for your most vulnerable pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils nationally, especially in reading and writing. You recognised that more needed to be done and you appointed your deputy headteacher as a champion for disadvantaged pupils. Strong leadership ensures that disadvantaged pupils are consulted on what helps them to learn well so that individualised support is put in place. Teaching is tailored to meet pupils' needs through additional support. Senior

leaders regularly monitor pupils' achievements to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do well. Standards for disadvantaged pupils are rising across the school because pupils have the right support to help them achieve as well as they can.

- Leaders are aware that middle-prior-attaining writers in key stage 2 are not achieving as well as they could. Standards in pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation improved in 2018. Leaders put in place clear expectations of what pupils need to be taught in each year group. Teachers' feedback helps pupils identify what they need to do to improve. In some classes, pupils' workbooks show that middle-prior-attaining pupils achieve well because they regularly write at length and use their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills in their writing. However, this is not consistent across the school. In most classes, pupils do not frequently write longer pieces of writing and use their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills well enough. As a result, middle-prior-attaining pupils are not making the progress they should across key stage 2 in writing.
- You recognised that leaders did not quickly identify the most able children when they first start school in Reception. Teachers did not challenge the most able children well enough and fewer children reached the higher standards at the end of Reception than other children nationally. However, you have begun to address this. Teachers know what children can do in reading and writing as a result of accurately finding out what children can do when they start school. Teachers plan for the most able children. Children's workbooks show that teachers challenge the most able writers to write to a higher standard. However, this has been less effective with children's mathematical understanding. Teachers do not have a good enough grasp of what children can and cannot do in mathematics when they start school. Therefore, they do not challenge the most able mathematicians as well as they could.
- Pupil exclusions are above national averages over time. Some parents and carers expressed concerns over bullying and pupils' behaviour in school. You have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils rise to meet them. Pupils have a good understanding of what you expect of them. Pupils say that behaviour in and around school is good. Parents spoken to at the beginning of the day agree with this view. Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and adults. Pupils care about each other and play happily and sociably at lunchtimes and playtimes. In lessons, pupils show good attitudes to learning, are attentive and well behaved. They respond swiftly to instructions from adults and work purposefully in lessons. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning and welcome the extra trips and extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school.
- Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour effectively so they can identify any extra support needed. Pastoral support is strong. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and highly effective support is put in place. Staff who work with pupils with more challenging behaviour are trained effectively. Pupils and staff spoke highly of the 'Reflection Room' which helps pupils manage their behaviour during break and lunchtimes.
- All leaders are committed to reducing exclusions. Governors are aware of their role with exclusions and carry them out effectively. Leaders know the pupils and their families well so they can rapidly intervene if needed. Specialist support is

put in place to ensure that the right approach works for each pupil. Many pupils show improvements in their behaviour as a result of the school's highly effective pastoral care and support.

- Previously, pupils' attendance was declining. You have high expectations that all pupils attend school regularly. Pupil attendance is a high priority in school. You have introduced a number of measures to improve pupils' attendance and regularly update parents at meetings and through the school's newsletter. You have been effective in identifying groups of pupils whose attendance is not good enough and support families to improve their child's attendance and punctuality. This approach is clearly working as attendance is now rising.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given more opportunities to embed their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills when writing at length in key stage 2
- teachers in Reception use accurate assessments to challenge the most able children to achieve well in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Lucas
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your senior and middle leaders, governors, staff and pupils. We visited lessons jointly to observe learning. I looked at pupils' workbooks with members of your senior leadership team. We considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including the school's self-evaluation document, safeguarding documents and attendance information. I considered governing body minutes and evidence on how they respond to exclusions. We discussed the school's behaviour and exclusion information. I spoke to pupils in lessons about their work and at lunchtime. I took into account 44 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and I spoke to parents as they dropped off their children at the beginning of the school day. There were no pupil survey responses and I took into account 43 staff survey responses.